

Richard Louv on the Trout in the Classroom program:

In 1999, I met a remarkable woman named Joan Stoliar. I accompanied her on a visit to a classroom at Intermediate School 318 in Brooklyn, where a cluster of seventh-graders attended four hundred trout fingerlings. The students hovered over the aquarium, setup to replicate a piece of trout stream.

Such programs—which began in California—have been springing up around the nation over the past decade. Their goal: to enliven biology and to connect kids to nature. The New York effort matches city kids with county kids, in what Stoliar called “a social experiment in creating sensitivity at both ends of the water tunnel.” Several hundred students in ten inner city New York and eight upstate schools work together to raise the trout and replant streams.

“The program gives city kids an appreciation for nature, but also teaches them about the source of their drinking water. They become watershed children,” she said. In October, each school received several hundred fertilized brown trout eggs from the state’s Department of Environmental Conservation; the hatchery director even gave the kids his home number in case anything went wrong. Students place the eggs in tanks designed to re-create the habitat of a trout stream.

Excerpt from: Louv, Richard, (2005), *Last Child in the Woods*, Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books.

NOTE: California’s program differs from New York’s but the basic elements are the same.